# Don't Go to Hell

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[0:00] 2 Thessalonians chapter 1, 2 Thessalonians chapter 1, that's in the latter part of the New Testament, among the small books.

The Bible is not short on descriptions of hell. Over and over again, different terms of explanation are used.
The culmination of those things make for the most awful picture. However, the reality is that all of these things combined draw us, draw for us an unimaginable picture of what hell is really like.
It is appropriate for whatever hell is, but it is beyond anything that we can imagine. It is real. It is unimaginable torment, and it is eternal.
There is no turning back. And I don't want you or your worst enemy to go. In 2 Thessalonians, Paul addresses a persecuted church that had continued to remain faithful even though they had faced ruthless torture.
[1:22] And in clearing up the matter, he gives us insights on eternity without the Lord. 2 Thessalonians chapter 1, beginning in verse 5, it says this, This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God for which you are also suffering.

Since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.
They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints and to be marveled at among all who have believed because our testimony to you was believed.
Not only is hell certain for those without Christ, it is awful.
And I want to look at four pictures today, some that I've referred to, but four pictures today that the Bible paints for us of this place of endless misery.
[2:57] The first picture that it paints for us is one of darkness and separation. In Matthew chapter 8, the Lord is marveling at the faith of a centurion.

And then he speaks of those who have had greater opportunity to hear the gospel but have not responded to it. And he says in that passage in Matthew chapter 8 verse 12, They will be thrown into outer darkness in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.
A couple of weeks ago I talked about the parable of the wedding banquet. It is one that shows the imagery that is used so often for when heaven is complete and this world is no more.
It's referred to often in scripture as the marriage supper of the lamb or at least referred to as that. With Christ as the groom and the church as the bride of Christ.
And Jesus shows that in this parable when he talks about how he sent out this invitation to a great wedding banquet. And the host of that banquet says that to those that would not come even though they were invited.
[4:18] He said bind them hand and foot and cast them into outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Paul speaks of in our passage today in verse 9 of separation. In the book of Revelation John speaks of the glory of the presence of God and the saints.
But outside that great city of his glory are the dogs. The darkness that Christ speaks of is of course a physical darkness.
But I want you to understand so much more that it is a spiritual darkness. The Bible often speaks of God as light and evil as darkness. And the darkness of hell is ultimate evil with no ray of goodness.

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It is the infinite separation from God who is the light. As there is no sun or stars in heaven the glory of God is all the lights needed. There is no God in hell. No light whatsoever.
[5:22] I had the privilege this week of going with our senior adults to Celebrators in Pigeon Forge. And I will tell you that going to a Christian concert at Six Flags with youth is nothing compared to going to Celebrators with a bunch of senior adults.

It's wide open. But while I was there I got to see a dear old friend and a mentor to me, Dr. Harold T. Bryson. Dr. Bryson was my preaching professor.
He's not responsible for it. But he taught me as much as he possibly could. And I've had the privilege of having him back in my churches. He's had bouts with cancer. He had a difficult bout with pneumonia.
And what a pleasure it was to be surprised to see him there and to be able to bump elbows with him and take a picture with him. He wrote two books on hell. And when he speaks of this darkness, this is what he says.
He says, outer darkness is not an optic problem but a sin problem. If one has walked in darkness or lived apart from God, the condition will continue in his death.
[6:33] In other words, he'll get what he wants. He tried to avoid God all his life. He succeeded. He'll miss God for eternity.

And that brings us to separation where he describes it as a great chasm here. And Dr. Bryson goes on in that book to say this about that.
He said, no one can fully conceive the meaning of being separated from God. No one on earth has ever been without God. We've never been apart from his love, his concern, his passion for our highest good and our redemption.
Even the most wicked person has been under the close supervision of God. Many people know that God knows where a sparrow falls and the very hairs of our head are numbered.
But in hell, God puts the wicked out of his mind. The human mind cannot comprehend the reality of being separated from God.
[7:35] Could this have been what the psalmist thought about in Psalm 88 verse 5? Free among the dead like the slain that lie in the grave, whom thou rememberest no more.

They are cut off from thy hand. Thinking about being forever shut out from the presence of God and from the mind of God strikes extreme terror.
Nonetheless, the Bible definitely teaches that hell means ultimate and endless separation from God. End of quote. Helmut Tillicke said that hell is to be separated from God.
And I quote, in such a way that one is compelled to see him. That one must see him as a thirsty man sees a silvery spring from which he dare not drink. This is hell.
To be forced to see the glory of God and have no access to it. It is a chasm of helplessness.
[8:42] When I meet with children that are trying to find out more about what it means to give their heart and life to the Lord Jesus Christ. I show them my artistic skills.

Don't laugh. Don't laugh. And I draw on their page a chasm. A separation between them and God. I tell them that God meant for them to be together. But when sin comes, he separates them. So I draw that. This week, somebody from a former church sent me this, a picture of this drawing.
It was written over a bulletin because some people do different things while preachers preach. And this kid had drawn this on the back of this bulletin.
When I left that church, she was too young to talk to about those matters. She hadn't dealt with that. But she had two older siblings that had both talked to me. And I had drawn something to this.
[9:48] This is not my drawing. This is hers. I had drawn something like that chasm and showed how Jesus is the bridge over our sin, removes our sin, and takes away the separation.

And I was blessed this week to get this from the mother of those children that said, My children are passing on to my youngest child what you taught them about what it means to give your heart and life to the Lord Jesus Christ.
That's pretty potent for me. That's pretty potent for me to see that generations continue if we just share the gospel and trust God with it. But where I get that chasm from is here.
There's a chasm here. And that chasm separates us in life outside of Christ. It will separate for us for all of eternity if we don't come to Christ.
Because once in hell, the hope of Christ is gone. One of the pictures of hell that points out in Scripture again and again is darkness and separation.

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[11:01] Another one is the flames of fire. Mark chapter 9 verse 48 says, Where the worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.

Time and time again the Bible speaks of the fires of hell. Jesus spoke of it. Paul spoke of it. Jude spoke of it. John saw it in the revelation of Christ.
The images of fire that are so often described point to a physical agony of hell. It's probably the most repeated description of hell, but yet it is probably the most mild of the pictures.
Because the agony of hell is not the physical suffering of hell, although it's very real. It is the spiritual suffering of hell. Yet God, but Christ points to this again and again because the reality is we can't understand the spiritual ramifications of being without God as I previously explained.
It is beyond us. We've never been without God totally. Now the question is, how can you have fire and darkness in the same place? I was in a theology class at Gardner Web years ago when somebody got excited after watching an indie race and watching somebody be caught on fire by jet fuel.
[12:19] You couldn't see the flame, but you could see that old boy suffering as he tried to get away from it. Old boy raised his hand in the back of the room and said, Hey, I know how you can have fire and darkness.

Jet fuel. Jet fuel is what fuels hell. I don't know about that. But I don't know about that. I don't think that's exactly what the point is here.
But if you ask how can you have fire and darkness in the same place, the answer is the same that you can have streets of transparent gold in heaven. It is beyond us, folks.
I believe both concepts are literal and beyond us. And to describe it best explains those things that are beyond us. The third picture that is seen again and again in the New Testament is the weeping and gnashing of teeth.
And I mean it's again and again. Seven times in the New Testament, the agony of hell is described as the weeping and gnashing of teeth. Twice because of the fires of hell. Four times due to the separation and the darkness that comes from hell.
[13:22] In other words, it's all tied together. If you doubt any part of hell, and I wouldn't if I were you, don't doubt the unspeakable suffering.

Because when it speaks of weeping, it's talking about the constant crying and sorrow and suffering. It talks about the gnashing of teeth. It speaks of not only extreme sufferings and outrageous pain, but it also speaks of the remorse of missed opportunities.
Of stubborn wills. The account that Jesus gives us of the rich man and Lazarus shows us that the agony that this man had was partially because of missed opportunities.
Not only for him, but for his loved ones that he knew he wanted to get a message to. It's the weeping and gnashing of teeth. And the fourth one is the death and destruction of hell.
This fourth picture in scripture is the death and destruction of hell. In Matthew chapter 10 verse 28, Jesus said, And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul.
[14:26] Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Now I want you to understand something. When the Bible speaks of death, it does not speak of an end of our existence.

Most of the time it speaks of separation. When a loved one dies that we know is a believer.
And we know that that loved one is in heaven. We don't grieve for their sake. If they're a child of God, we know by the promises of God that they're better off.
We don't grieve for their sake. They'll be fine. Why do we grieve? We grieve because of the separation that we're experiencing. We grieve because we have to live here without them.
In Revelation 20 verse 14, John speaks of the lake of fire as the second death. As the Bible describes it, one goes to hell upon their death.
[15:31] The story of the rich man in hell tells us that they are tormented immediately. However, when the Lord returns and judgment is cast on each person, the consummation of heaven will come.

And what that means, I believe, is that all God's saints will be home together. But as well, the consummation of hell will come. All sinners will suffer for eternity.
And the present hell will be cast into a lake of fire. It's called the second death. Because it is when the blessings and the fellowship and the hope is eternally lost.

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Don't misunderstand me. It's lost at death. But scripture is clear that at some point, when this earth is over, the finality of heaven and the marriage supper of the Lamb will take place.
But in hell, it is amplified. It is stated. It is declared. It is officially over. Hope is forever gone. That's the death or the separation of hell.
[16:43] There's also the destruction of hell. And when Christ describes the destruction of hell, he pointed to Gehenna. And he used that word.

You'll see it often in the Greek when it speaks of hell. That was a place in his day, a literal place in his day. Ge means valley.
Hinnah is short for Hinnom. So it's the valley of Hinnom. And Hinnom means lamentation. So it's literally the valley of sorrow. The valley of lament.
During the reigns of Ahaz and Manasseh, there was a temple erected to a Canaanite fire god named Moloch in a valley outside of Jerusalem.
There the people worshipped Moloch in idle, satanic worship, to be honest. A major part of their worship was the sacrifice of children.
[17:47] And a major part of their worship was to put a baby in the arms of a heated idol and burn that child to death. It brought forth screams from the baby.

It brought forth whales from the mothers. It was all part of a pagan sacrificial ritual. And that's why they call it the Valley of Lamentation.
When Josiah became king, he forbid worship there. And it became a place of despise to the Jews. It became so despised that people threw their trash there.
Unclaimed criminals' bodies and the unclaimed bodies of the poor would be thrown in there. And for sanitation purposes, there would always be a fire that would be going in that valley.
The worm never died because there was always something else thrown in for the worm to eat off of. The fire never went out because they kept stoking it for sanitation purposes.
[18:57] Christ said, hell's like the place where the fire never goes out and the worm never dies. It's Gehenna. Constantly burning and constantly being filled with more trash.

When Christ described what hell was like, he described Gehenna. It was as if God, Christ was saying, hell is as if you were living in the midst of that ditch for all of eternity.
It's worse than you can imagine. It's not that hard to get a grasp of the destructive picture of hell. And I believe when you understand the darkness and the separation, I believe when you understand the weeping and the gnashing of teeth, I believe when you understand the flames of fire and when you understand the death and destruction of hell, you begin to at least see the seriousness of hell.
The need for us in the day in which we live to be about the cause of Christ, to make a difference in our world.
[20:10] I heard a preacher one time talk about sitting in the stands at an Alabama-Auburn football game. The Iron Bowl, as it's called, is a rivalry that makes the Carolina-Clemson rivalry look trivial.

It is serious. In 2013, the ball game was tied with one second left. They had to look at a review clock to make sure there was still one second left, but Alabama was playing, so they put another second on the clock.
To give them the opportunity to kick a 57-yard field goal. They'd already used a kicker three times, had missed three field goals that game, so they brought in a redshirt freshman to kick for the first time, I believe, in that ball game.
To kick a 57-yard field goal with one second left on the clock with the game tied. He kicked it good, but it was short.
Auburn had put one defensive back in the end zone in case something like that happened. Chris Davis was standing in the end zone, and what looks to the eye at about nine yards deep into a 10-yard deep end zone, he caught the ball and ran, well, college statistics say, because they only count it once you get out of the end zone, a hundred yards back for a touchdown, and Auburn won the game.
[21:53] Justice served. Alabama was not able to go to the national championship because of that.

Alabama fans were distraught, at least most of them. Michelle from Alabama was not distraught. But Michelle was at a party watching the ball game, and Adrian, her friend, was upset.

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Adrian was so upset, she flew into a rage, not only over the loss, but the fact that Michelle was not concerned enough about the loss. Somebody who was at the party said, because Michelle said, well, it's not as bad as the Miami Heat losing a basketball game.
Because it was so trivial, Adrian started shooting, and Michelle died at a watch party. Alabama's serious about football.
And I have a preacher friend that was sitting in the stands at the Iron Ball at some point in the past. And everyone was cheering hard, and back and forth the jeers would come, and they would be sent.
[23:19] For everything from your coach stinks to your mama's ugly, I mean, they went back and forth. But when a cheer began around him, it turned his mind from the game.

The chant from the Auburn fans was, go to hell, Alabama. Go to hell. Go to hell, Alabama.
Go to hell. Go to hell, Alabama. Go to hell. Go to hell. Go to hell.
And he said, in my heart, I wanted to shout louder than them, no, Alabama. No, Alabama. Don't go to hell. Alabama, please don't go to hell.
Lose the ball game. Fumble the football. Miss the field goal. But please, don't go to hell. Christ died, so you don't have to go to hell. Don't go to hell.
[24:52] Friend, hell is no game. It is not to be played with. It is not to be joked about.

God, whatever you do, don't go to hell. Please don't go to hell.
Jesus died, so you don't have to. And if you surrender your heart and life to the Lord Jesus Christ, he'll save you where you are.
Hell wasn't built for you. It was built for the demons and the devil.
And you don't have to go. Don't go to hell. And let's help as many people as we possibly can.
[25:57] To never spend eternity apart from God. Charles Spurgeon, I've used it before.

I'll use it again. He said it this way. If sinners be damned, at least let them leap to hell over our dead bodies. And if they perish, let them perish with our arms wrapped about their knees, imploring them to stay.
If hell must be filled, let it be filled in the teeth of our exertions. And let not one go unwarned or unprayed for. Please don't go to hell.
You don't have to. And today is the day of salvation. And you'll change your life. Today. With every head bowed.
And every eye closed. If you're here this morning. And there's never been a time in your life where you've asked the Lord Jesus to forgive you of your sins.
[27:06] To cleanse you and to come into your life. And to change you. I want you to know that if you'll do that today. He'll save you. Salvation is open to all who will come.

To him. The apostle Paul said, whosoever will may come. I'm glad today that I can offer salvation without any hesitation.
And tell you, you can come to Christ. And he'll save you. If you feel even an itching for that. It's not from you. It's because he's drawing you to himself.
And so I encourage you to be faithful in that. Maybe you're here this morning and you've acknowledged Christ as your personal Lord and Savior.
But you've never publicly made that known. You've been a private Christian. Just never let that be known. How important it is for you to follow not only by his commission but by his example.
[28:17] The Lord Jesus Christ example of being baptized. To publicly acknowledge your faith before the Lord. If you've never been baptized, we're going to do it next week.

I encourage you to come. Make things right. Take that first step of obedience in salvation. Maybe you're here and God's drawing you to First Baptist Church.
God's doing a wonderful work in our midst. And I thank God for that. You want to join hands with us and journey for the Lord.
Let's do all we can for the kingdom together. You come as God leads. Maybe you're here this morning and you're a Christian. And you've made it public. You may even be a member of First Baptist.
But there's things in your life you need to deal with before the Lord. And these steps up here are just a makeshift offer for you to lay your burden down before the Lord and get it right before him.
[29:15] I have no idea what God is doing in your heart and life today. But I know you'll never be satisfied unless you're obedient to follow him. And so I ask you that you'll just follow the Lord. Just

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obey him.

I'll never want you or ask you to do anything more than what God tells you to do. And I hope you're never satisfied with less. Lord Jesus, I love you and I thank you, dear God, for your love for us. And I ask right now that you'll work and you'll move in our midst, Father, as only you can. Oh, Lord, I pray. In Jesus' precious name, amen. Amen. Amen.

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